

April 2008

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS & EXCHANGE

Enabling Students and Teachers in the United States and Countries with Sizeable Muslim Populations to Build Cultural Understanding in an Educational Context

Azerbaijan * Bahrain * Egypt * Indonesia * Iraq * Israel * Lebanon * Morocco



Oman * Pakistan * Syria * United Arab Emirates * United States * Uzbekistan



International Education and Resource Network

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS & EXCHANGE (GCE) PROGRAM



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Global Connections & Exchange Program [GCE] is made possible through support and funding from the US State Department's [DOS] Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs [ECA]. It is a part of iEARN-USA's BRIDGE project which is committed to connecting students and teachers in the US to those in countries with significant Muslim populations.

iEARN administers the GCE Program in the countries of Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and the United States.

The GCE Program provides the opportunity to connect through virtual discussion forums and online projects that encourage meaningful dialogue and collaboration. In addition, iEARN offers teachers from all disciplines online professional development courses.

In July of 2008, GCE participants will attend the iEARN Annual Conference and Youth Summit in Bukhara, Uzbekistan.

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iEARN Azerbaijan
İFKM Uşaq və Gənclər Mərkəzi

Newly Trained GCE Teachers Conduct GCE Workshop

GCE teachers from Ganja, who were introduced to the program at iEARN-Azerbaijan's Spring GCE Workshop in Baku, held their own GCE workshop for teachers and students in Ganja at the city's Educational Center this April. The teachers received support from the director and staff of the center, as well as from Peace Corps Volunteers in the region. Irada Samadova, one of the GCE Country Coordinators, has been visiting Ganja regularly to conduct ESL training sessions and present the GCE program to local educators at the branch office of the English Teachers' Association. Despite the scarcity of internet connections,

and the slow speed of the connections that do exist, the GCE teachers of Ganja are extremely motivated and have been working hard to get Ganja's students connected to students in the U.S. and around the world.

The GCE educators and students in Azerbaijan celebrated Global Youth Service Day through a variety of projects. Students worked in their schools, organized community cleanups, planted flowers, helped elderly people in their communities, and visited local orphanages. GCE students from 6 schools in Ganja gathered



GCE teachers expanding the GCE program in Ganja.

together on April 25, 2008 to plant 30 trees in the city. GCE teachers and students from School 164 visited a local orphanage they have been working with, bringing presents and essential supplies, as well as just spending time reading and playing with the children.

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U.S. and Pakistan See "Eye to Eye"

GCE teacher Sadia Kazmi and her students in grade 6 at the Al Mur-taza School in Karachi have been collaborating with students in grade 10 at the University Preparatory School in Seattle, WA on the Eye to Eye project. The students in Pakistan drew pictures about pollution and what can be done to stop it, while the American students put together images and quotes to represent themselves in a self-portrait. All the images were uploaded to the project forum to share them with each other. It was a great opportunity for these GCE



A GCE classroom making images to send to their partner classroom in Seattle, WA. students from the U.S. and Pakistan to communicate through the images they produced and further the cause of global understanding.

iEARN-Pakistan

Pakistani Youth Celebrate GYSD

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) has inspired about 1,000 GCE students from almost 50 schools across Pakistan to work on community service activities focusing on a wide range of issues including: the eradication of poverty, adult education, education for women, pollution, recycling of waste material, beautification of the community, traffic problems, the importance of senior citizens, a healthy diet, cleanliness, drug abuse, and the war against terrorism, world hunger. Project reports from GYSD can be found in the forum for the CIVICS: Youth Volunteerism and Service project.

iEARN-Bahrain



GCE Students Going the Extra Mile to Collaborate on Projects

GCE students have been working with their teacher at Isa Town Commercial School to collaborate with American students as part of the Moving Voices online course (Unsung Heroes theme). As part of this collaboration, the GCE students visited people with special needs at the Creation Center in Bahrain and interviewed them in order to make a film that tells their stories of courage and the many challenges they have overcome.

GCE students from Khawla Secondary School are collaborating with their peers in Canada and the U.S. as part of the Food For Thought project. Students started discussion about "Traditional Recipes from Bahrain" and shared 8 traditional recipes and pictures of them preparing the recipes in the online forum, and are planning to add more soon! The students organized a cooking session at the school to get the recipes and get pictures of the cooking process,

and visited local spice shops to take pictures of traditional ingredients to share on the forum. At the end of the year, students are planning to collect all the recipes they have shared in a booklet to be published with a CD of the information as well. Many of the students

have commented that working on the Food for Thought project has made school more interesting and relevant to them, which has resulted in their motivation to go above and beyond the project guidelines.

GCE students at Al Hedaya Al Khalifeya School are working on the My School, Your School project, which aims at making students aware of the similarities and differences in school life around the world so that they able to



A GCE student cooking Bahraini Kabab, a traditional dish that will be included in the published cookbook.

evaluate their own educational system in a critical way and see how they can help to improve it from their role as students. The students divided into production teams focusing on collecting information, web design (presenting the information), editing, and photography. Students read about other schools in the U.S. and other countries in the project forum and have been responding to the other students as well as posting information about their own school.

iEARN-Iraq

GCE Students and Teachers Celebrate Earth Day and GYSD

GCE students and teachers from the Agriculture Bakrajo Secondary School in the city of Sulemany participated in a combined Earth Day and Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) environmental activity on April 22, 2008. The two teach-

ers and their students visited the public spaces and parks around the city presenting on the importance of a clean environment and the ways that people can improve the environment around them. The GCE students and teachers also posted signs and flyers with advice about how everybody can do their part to save the planet.



GCE educators posting flyers about the environment for GYSD.

iEARN-Egypt

GCE Participants Take Part in Egypt's Fourth YouthCaN Conference

Delegations of students and educators from 15 GCE schools in Alexandria, Cairo, Giza, and Monofia participated in iEARN-Egypt's Fourth Annual YouthCaN Conference at El Sadat City School on April 7, 2008. The students presented their research on environmental issues such as global warming, clean energy, and air pollution. The GCE students also engaged in community service as part of the conference, planting trees in the local community to create awareness about the environmental challenges facing Egypt.

Other activities included interac-

tive training sessions about recycling, painting a large mural about the environment, the composition of a song about YouthCaN, a visit to the Chinese Park in El Sadat City to observe the different plant species, and a videoconference with the YouthCaNers at the international conference at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Many prominent persons attended the conference, includ-



A GCE student being interviewed about the YouthCaN conference on OTV.

ing the Governor of Monofia, the Director of Secondary Education for the Ministry of Education, the Chairman of El Sadat City, and a representative from the Ministry of Environmental Affairs among many others. The conference was also covered by OTV, a popular Egyptian satellite channel.

iEARN-Oman

GCE School Hosts "English Week"

GCE teachers Mahmoud Al-Waili and Salim Al-Busaidi worked to organize an "English Week" event consisting of 6 days of activities promoting the learning of English at the Osama Bin Zaid School in Adam from April 15-22, 2008.

During the week of activities, GCE students from the school presented the GCE program and hosted an exhibition of their GCE work. Some of the other activities included: presentations about the opportunities to study English at the University level, exhibitions attended by the local Shura (Parliament) Representative as well as other special guests, online chats

with other schools, environment awareness campaigns, and safety training to prepare the school in the event of an emergency.

There was also an opening and closing ceremony, at which certificates were presented to participants and prizes given to the winners of the quiz competitions that were held each morning to reinforce



"English Week" activities at a GCE School in Adam.

students' learning. GCE students and teachers in the English Club also worked together to write up press releases about the events to distribute to the local media in both English and Arabic.

iEARN-Indonesia

GCE Mini-grant Funds Educational Activities for Youth in Refugee Home

Ten students from Al-Azhar High School, who had never before been involved in any sort of community service activity, used a GCE mini-grant for \$250 to organize a visit with some educational activities to a refugee home for youths in Depok on March 30, 2008. The refugee home, called the Aswain (The Braver) Timor Foundation, is for those displaced by the conflict with East Timor and houses about 50 youths from 4-16 years old in 3 rooms. The youths are completely dependent on NGOs, the government, and charities for all of their activities and educational fees.

The GCE students showed a film about global warming and led a discussion about the issue, including what they can do to have a positive impact on the environment. This led into a discussion

about the 3 Rs of recycling, particularly how students can reuse things that they would normally throw away as garbage. The 10 GCE students then led the youths of the refugee home in two activities that taught them to make use of "garbage" as well as produce products to earn additional income.

The first activity was "Painting Bottles." The youth took glass bottles, filled them with sand, and used the bottle as a canvas upon which to paint and include messages about issues important to them. Many of the youth in the refugee home put a message about how to protect the environment, while others put their dreams for the future, such as "No War."

The second activity was about how to create colorful pins out of the plastic casings of markers. The GCE students taught the youth to break apart the colored plastic from old discarded markers into small pieces, put a mix of colored pieces into a spoon, melt the plastic together by holding the spoon



GCE students working with youth at a refugee home to make plastic pins.

over the flame of a candle, place the pin into the melted plastic, and then to remove it after it has cooled for a couple of minutes.

The youth at the refugee home enjoyed the activities and getting to spend time with other youth their age. The day concluded with the youth of the refugee home sharing some folksongs with the GCE students, who then presented them with a soccer ball, something the youth had been wanting for a long time.

The GCE students were sad when they had to leave, but they also had the joy of having made new friends and knowing they had done something good for others. The first experience of community service for these 10 GCE students from the Al-Azhar School was successful, and they all want to return to the refugee home and continue their service there.



Painted bottles created as part of a community service project at a refugee home funded by a GCE mini-grant.